



## JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

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**HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

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### **Memorandum**

To: Members of Commissioners Court  
From: Jim Bethke, Director  
Date: July 9th, 2020  
Subject: Status memo on non-criminal justice alternatives to incarceration

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**Research Scope:** On June 9th, Commissioners Court approved a motion made by Commissioner Rodney Ellis instructing the Justice Administration Department (JAD), the Commissioners Court Analyst's Office (CCAO), and other relevant departments such as the Budget Management Department to identify best practices and make recommendations for effective non-criminal justice alternatives to punitive criminal justice responses to address: 1) poverty, 2) homelessness, 3) mental health, 4) substance use, and 5) violence prevention. Within the best practices of alternative justice responses, research should compare how other jurisdictions' programs and approaches work toward the goals of reducing criminal justice system involvement, improving community health, and reducing racial disparities in the Harris County justice system. Best practices featured in the report should include: 1) the short and long-term cost-effectiveness based on other jurisdiction's results, and 2) recommendations concerning the continued investment in or reallocation of resources from existing criminal justice system strategies and the investment in or allocation of resources to non-criminal justice system programs and structures that further these goals.

**Funding:** Part of the motion instructed JAD to establish standards and qualifications for the programs and guidelines for how to allocate grants to programs and cities based on size and demonstrated need for such programs. The motion approved put aside an initial 25 million dollars in funding for programs that meet the minimum standards established by JAD and the CCAO for non-criminal justice system alternatives to current punitive criminal justice responses to address the social issues listed above. Five out of the 25 million dollars will be made available as grants to cities within Harris County that implement qualifying programs. The final report findings will be presented at a public hearing.

**Purpose of Memo:** This memo complies with the request by Commissioners Court to provide with the following information 30 days after the passage of the motion:

- 1) preliminary findings of alternative justice responses worth exploring,
- 2) recommended next steps to complete the report and analysis, and
- 3) additional resources needed to expedite the research and writing process.

**Report Methodology:** This report will describe best practices from other jurisdictions related to non-criminal justice alternatives to punitive criminal justice responses to address: 1) poverty, 2) homelessness, 3) mental health, and 4) substance use. Violence interruption strategies will be included in a separate report at the request of Commissioners Court. The information contained in the final report will be gathered through the analysis of program budgets, public-facing documents and metrics, qualitative evidence, interviews and email correspondences with agency officials, program directors, service providers, law enforcement, community groups, program experts, and audits and outside reviews of such programs. The best practices presented in the final report will be evaluated for all areas of interest that they serve, as these areas and programs often have overlapping goals and services. The report will also include critical relevant similarities and differences between the featured jurisdictions and that of Harris County using the available demographic, program information, and other material available data.

**Research Limitations:** The limitations of this report include the short timeline allotted for its completion—given the scope and importance of the topic—and JAD's lack of access to critical data. Currently, the JAD team does not have access to incident and arrest reports from Superior and related law enforcement systems, making it challenging to present an accurate picture of how law enforcement personnel responds to service calls related to acts that can stem from poverty, homelessness, mental health, and substance use. A request for this data has been made to Universal Services and the Harris County Constables, which is currently under review. As research is being conducted on a national scale, differing programs and practices exist in different legal and structural contexts, which may limit or change scopes and abilities of programming across differing entities. Additionally, given time constraints and much of the raw information on these programs being protected, we will be unable to conduct an independent analysis of program outcomes and costs. Instead, this report will rely on program data, metrics, and outcome information gathered from existing internal and external reports. Other challenges and research limitations may arise from the collection of Harris County program data, and from the information we obtain during the interview process.

**Preliminary Findings:** Many of the service calls, patrols, stops, and any other form of contact law enforcement officers respond to and make daily are for minor disputes, or alleged criminal acts related to poverty, homelessness, substance use and possession, and mental health. Limited resources and the growing demand by the public to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system, improve outcomes, and get to the root causes of an individual's involvement with the criminal justice system are inspiring

jurisdictions to consider the implementation of non-criminal justice responses to address social problems. These responses include connecting individuals with social workers as a first response, housing first solutions, mental health, and substance abuse treatment for those who need and access to critical wrap-around services and aftercare. Please note that the approaches described throughout the memo have not been thoroughly researched or vetted—that will come during the second phase of the project— and they are not meant to represent an exhaustive list of what other jurisdictions are doing to strengthen non-criminal justice responses to the social problems law enforcement respond to. Also, this memo does not include the strategies Harris County is currently deploying—that too will come at another phase of the project. Finally, some of the examples included in this memo involve law-enforcement and social service agencies to divert individuals from the justice system.

### **Approaches to Addressing Poverty**

According to the American Bar Association (ABA), the criminalization of poverty links justice outcomes to a person's economic status. As fines go unpaid, low-income individuals face a higher risk of becoming incarcerated for driving violations, outstanding tickets, or other minor offenses that now result in jail time and or an individual's property is seized, whereas it usually would not. Criminal justice debt creates a spiral of consequences for those who cannot pay; without intervention, the amounts continue to increase, creating a more significant unpaid burden. Unpaid fines and fees also result in negative consequences, outside of the outstanding debt itself, to low-income individuals already struggling to make ends meet, including suspension of a driver's license, damaged credit scores, and criminal records, which hinder the ability to find employment, stable housing, and other critical services. These further outcomes, such as cycles of debt, probation, and incarceration while exacerbating poverty and extreme poverty (Harvard Law School, 2017).

In Texas, The Brennan Center reports that 90% of the fines and fees assessed between 2012-2018 were done at the Justice of Peace or municipal court level, with most being traffic-related cases (Brennan Center for Justice, 2019). JAD will write a separate report recommending ways that Harris County can address the impact of the imposition of fines and fees associated with criminal offenses have on individuals, the consequences of unpaid fines, the use and effects of cash bail in pretrial detention, and disparate enforcement or impact of such practices on low-income individuals, minoritized racial and ethnic groups, and any other vulnerable groups. As such, strategies mean to minimize the criminalization of poverty by assessing an individual's ability to pay, working toward alleviating the root cause of the initial fine and creating a feasible way to zero out the balance of the fine or fee are not included in this memo. However, below are some strategies being utilized by other jurisdictions for minimizing the criminalization of poverty, which focuses on different ways of dealing with disputes, driving violations, and property and or minor theft crime.

**Dispute Resolution:** The reach of law enforcement extends into our neighborhood disputes, family disagreements, and domestic squabbles. For instance, over the month ending June 24th, 2020, Cleveland police received approximately 23,000 calls, including 911 calls and reports initiated by police, according to an analysis conducted by the *Cleveland Scene* (Standifer, 2020). Much like the analysis conducted by the *New York Times*, fewer than 2% of those calls involved calls for violent offenses. The vast majority of those calls resulted in no arrest and required no police action. For disputes involving violence, jurisdictions like Chicago are using the Ceasefire model program. This model uses dispute resolution and focuses on changing the behavior of a small number of high risk (being shot or being a shooter) community members living in shooting hot spots by providing select services such as employment, school, and GED program, and gang disengagement assistance. The model utilizes violence interrupters, which are civilians that aim to deter violence. Many are former gang members who have served time in prison, which gives them greater credibility among current gang members.

**Civilian Patrols for Driving Violations:** Driving violations resulting in traffic tickets not only have negative consequences for individuals struggling financially but can also lead to unsafe interactions with law enforcement. According to the US Department of Justice Special Report on police behavior during traffic and street stops, over 62.9 million drivers and passengers are stopped every year by law enforcement (Langton, 2013). Black drivers are 30% more likely to be pulled over than white drivers.

Moreover, Black and Latinx people are significantly more likely to have their cars searched, and their cash seized than white drivers (Ingraham, 2014). These traffic stops are not making our highways safer: the national death rate from traffic accidents has remained the same over the last decade (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). Instead, they may lead to unconstitutional and excessive confrontations, and, in some cases, deadly force by police, disproportionately impacting communities of color (Markowitz, 2016).

As mentioned above, a lot of these traffic stops lead to hefty fines, leading to unnecessary financial burdens for community members. In light of this, the city of New Orleans began a process to create a civilian patrol responsible for responding to non-emergency traffic situations. This patrol receives basic training to handle these situations as well as served as an initiative for community members to understand policing from a different perspective.

**Unarmed Citizen Officers to Respond to Property and or Theft Crimes:** The call to the police about a suspicious \$20.00 bill ended in police brutality leading to the murder of George Floyd and added tragedy for his family. An investigation built around counterfeit money does require the presence of armed officers. Non-law enforcement citizen officers with proper training may be a viable alternative to investigate property crimes when the presence of armed police officers is not necessary. There is not a realistic expectation

that a stolen bike or iPhone will be returned to the original owner, or the perpetrator of the offense will be prosecuted.

Instead of armed officers, unarmed, trained citizen officers could be tasked with walking foot patrol beats, handling reports of allegations of counterfeit bills, handling reports of stolen bicycles, and other low-level property offenses (Bullington, 2014). The civilian officers could receive training in interviewing techniques, as well as de-escalation techniques. Additionally, civilian patrols may not seem as intimidating as armed officers yet, wear uniforms that make them distinguishable as done in the New Orleans French Quarter civilian patrol. Note, the New Orleans pilot program for a civilian patrol was canceled in 2016 after one year of operation due to a lack of productivity (Bullington, 2016).

### **Approaches to Homelessness**

Along the same lines as the criminalization of poverty is the criminalization of individuals experiencing homelessness who are carrying out 'life-sustaining activities,' according to the National Coalition for the Homeless. Life-sustaining activities include sleeping, eating, or sitting in public spaces. This results in persons experiencing homelessness getting pushed into the criminal justice system, without addressing the underlying causes of homelessness. According to the National Law Center of Homelessness and Poverty, these interactions do not address underlying causes such as accumulated debt, lack of wrap-around services, and unemployment and often leave individuals with criminal records making obtaining employment and housing more complicated (The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2009).

Jurisdictions have been implementing alternatives to arrest and incarceration that focus on working with stakeholders to connect homeless individuals with housing and often needed to wrap-around services to target and address underlying problems. Some practices that stand out center on assessing needs and attaining housing with few barriers and in a way that meets other needs an individual may have, such as medical health issues, mental health issues, or substance use.

**Homelessness Units:** People who experience homelessness are often the targets of unnecessary and costly arrests and involvement with the criminal system. In Portland, for instance, the Oregonian reported that people experiencing homelessness accounted for 52% of arrests, even though homeless people make up only 3% of the city's population. The vast majority of those arrests—over 80%—were for nonviolent offenses, such as disorderly conduct, drug possession, or failure to appear for court (Lewis et al., 2018).

Specialized homeless units can reduce law enforcement interactions with those experiencing homelessness. Organizations like Portland Street Response provide compassion and appropriate care by medics and trained, non-law enforcement community workers (Sand, 2020). In most cases, law enforcement may lack the tools or

resources to respond to problems associated with homelessness and are often left with criminalizing homelessness in response to calls about "unwanted people." With the appropriate funding from local, state, and federal governments, specialized teams led by their communities' needs could help create the necessary safety nets for a vulnerable population.

**Housing First Approach:** The Housing First approach focuses on finding a safe and stable place for homeless individuals to reside in. They also receive substance abuse treatment, services, and other resources to help them get back on their feet. There are two models that follow the Housing First approach: permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing (Rapid Re-Housing). In regards to permanent supportive housing, individuals receive access to services that provide long-term rental assistance as well as several support services. On the other hand, rapid re-housing provides short-term rental assistance and service to ensure people are housed rapidly and remain housed. The Housing First model not only proves successful in ending homelessness for people quickly but also proves to be cost-efficient, saving emergency services \$31,545 per person over the duration of two years. With access to programs offering a Housing First approach to homelessness, community members are offered a chance at having a permanent roof over their heads.

**Wet Homeless Shelters:** Wet shelters like the 214-bed program in Contra Costa County, CA, uses a harm reduction model which allows individuals who suffer from drug and alcohol problems to be in a supervised environment where physical harm to themselves and others may be minimized. These programs admit and grant beds to people based on set requirements such as multiple-year homelessness, a minimum number of failed rehab attempts, and so on (Runyon, 2017). Once admitted, individuals gain access to a wealth of services, including behavioral health care, life skills training, and so on. Another example of successful wet homeless shelters is one operated by the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) in Seattle, Washington. This program reportedly had only 23 percent of participants remain homeless after two-years. Wet homeless shelters cover several bases in terms of providing services supporting people reintegrate back into the community with a roof over their heads.

### **Approaches to Public and Mental Health**

Mental health experts and trained social workers could be hired to address the mental health needs of those in crisis. Law enforcement without extensive training in this area is ill-equipped to carry out this critical support system in our communities. Without effective training, law enforcement officers will use the main powers at their disposal: arrest and incarceration, in fact, 25% of those with mental illness have been arrested (Roy, 2014).

According to a systematic review of homeless individuals with a mental health problem, individuals who suffer from mental health problems are more likely to be victimized or be charged with a crime. These individuals are also more likely to have more encounters with law enforcement and end up in jail (Roy, 2014). Harris County, like other similar

systems, has a high percentage of its jail population either on psychotropic medication or having been identified as having a mental health indicator (Harris County, 2020). In Texas, as in many other states, the County Jails have become the largest mental health institution in the state, resulting in individuals' mental health needs not being managed. Individuals with unmet mental health needs have more extended jail stays and higher rates of recidivism, resulting in higher costs to the county, while still not providing adequate resources to for needed long term care (The Center for Health and Social Policy, 2019).

**Drop Off Centers:** Instead of criminalizing those who require stabilization amid a crisis, non-law enforcement integrated crisis drop off centers meet the needs of those in the communities (Covington, 2016). Integrated drop off centers are community-based mental health systems, with a "no rejection" policy, for individuals experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis. Such centers allow crisis management teams, or even trained law enforcement, to drop off individuals in the midst of crisis, reducing incarceration and police contact. Maricopa County, AZ, currently operates eight centers.

**De-escalation Training:** Fewer people may seek the assistance they need if the only available choice arrives with a weapon and the real threat of punishment. A different approach can be taken, for example, mental health workers and social workers are trained to deal with mental health needs and mental health breakdowns; they can be taught and learn how to employ de-escalation techniques; they can approach our vulnerable community members, not with weapons, but with words. In Denver, Colorado, the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program launched earlier this month, directing community members to call 911 for experienced, trained mental health medics when they or family members are experiencing a mental health crisis (Denver Justice Project, 2020). Additionally, STAR conducts outreach to individuals by sending a van to those in need of service from a clinician and paramedics to handle cases that cover not only mental health but also drug overdoses and welfare checks (Ufheil, 2020). And the public supports such programs. According to a recent national survey conducted by the Justice Collaborative Institute, likely voters showed 68% supported the creation of a non-law enforcement emergency response program.

## **Approaches to Substance Use**

Individuals arrested for possession or drug use, and those who may benefit from treatment often find themselves involved in the criminal justice system, which is designed to address underlying causes and leaves this population's needs unmet. In many cases, jailing people becomes the number one option to deal with the problem instead of using non-criminal justice public health responses as an alternative. Persons struggling with addiction often experience a crisis that requires an emergency response, including emergency medical services. These interactions can result in an individual ending up incarcerated or in a hospital emergency room. Both responses are costly and generally fail to address the crises or provide for the long term treatment that may be required to

prevent individuals from cycling through the justice and emergency care systems without improvement. Best practice approaches to substance use generally include post-crisis stabilization and connection to long term treatment, which addresses the underlying need.

To address this problem, some jurisdictions have opted to use non-arrest alternatives that focus on providing treatment to those who suffer from addiction by health care professionals instead of jailing individuals and ending up with a criminal record. The alternatives listed below are identified by The Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative (PTACC), a collaborative made up of practitioners in law enforcement, behavioral health, community, advocacy, research, and public policy, whose mission is to strategically widen community behavioral health and social service options available through law enforcement diversion. This collaborative helped construct the SAFE Project team of experts that seeks meaningful metrics that strengthen SAFE's interdependent six lines of operation, and ultimately aim to achieve SAFE Communities and SAFE Campuses across the nation (SAFE Project, 2017).

**Self-Referral:** In the event where an individual involved in substance use chooses to seek out help to address addiction, the person makes initial contact with law enforcement for a treatment referral without worrying about being arrested. In this case, a notable program includes the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI) Angel Program, a nonprofit organization located in Massachusetts. Essentially, this program supports law enforcement agencies and the community through early diversion models, which step in before an individual enters the criminal justice system. Additionally, this program provides access to several resources available to those who need them, including connections to treatment scholarships, seed grants, "Recovery coaches," and some other resources available to both law enforcement and the community (The Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative). This way, the program treats substance abuse as a "disease, not a crime," centering the issue around public health. In light of this, self-referral programs serve as options that divert individuals from an arrest and instead provide learning opportunities for law enforcement to understand the issue from a decriminalized lens.

**Active Outreach:** When it comes to active outreach programs, law enforcement makes initial contact with individuals and serves as a bridge between individuals dealing with substance abuse and treatment providers. In relation to this, there are two other programs known for this type of intervention. In regard to PAARI, these programs include the Quick Response Team (QRT) as well as Peninsula Community Health Services. Peninsula Community Services offers community members services through telehealth as well as referrals in which their mobile behavioral health clinic can aid those in need of transportation (Peninsula Community Health Services, 2013). According to the organization, they offer affordable healthcare services, including medication-assisted treatment for addiction, behavioral health medication consultations, and healthy lifestyle counseling. Ultimately, the primary providers of these services are health care professionals, and law enforcement serve as guides to these services.

**Naloxone Plus:** Furthermore, Naloxone Plus programs serve as alternative options to direct involvement of the criminal justice system when it comes to substance abuse issues. In these programs, individuals engage with treatment due to an overdose response or as severe substance use situations that lead to an acute risk for opioid overdose. Some examples of these types of programs include Drug Abuse Response Team (DART), Quick Response Team (QRT), and Stop, Engage, Educate and Rehabilitate (STEER). A closeup of DART shows that in calls and responses made surrounding substance abuse emergencies, those involved are law enforcement officers as well as healthcare professionals. The traditional role of a law enforcement officer goes beyond what the public typically sees as their regular duty. This role is enhanced by directly engaging affected individuals and their loved ones with linkage to treatment (Lucas County Sheriff's Office). All in all, this type of program shows how law enforcement officers may receive more specialized training to pinpoint individuals suffering from substance abuse in a direction that avoids further contact with the criminal justice system.

**Officer Prevention:** Officers may serve as the initial contact and treatment engagement without filing charges. Programs replicating this example include Crisis Intervention Team, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), Mobile Crisis, Co-Responders, Crisis/Triage/Assessment Centers, Veterans Division, and Stop, Triage, Engage, Educate, Rehabilitate (STEER). For instance, the STEER program supports individuals suffering from substance abuse by providing access to treatment. Law enforcement officers make the first contact by doing a risk screen assessing whether or not the individual has a lower likelihood of risk for failure in the criminal justice system. From here, the law enforcement officer may or may not present charges against the individual, but when they do not, the individual is referred to STEER "via a prevention contact" (Addiction Policy Forum, 2017). Then, healthcare professionals remain in charge of an individual's treatment. All in all, law enforcement officers remain involved in the process up until they choose whether or not to press charges on the individual.

**Officer Intervention:** As stated above, law enforcement officers serve as the primary contact when it comes to intervening in situations related to substance use. Additionally, law enforcement officers may hold charges in abeyance or issue civil citations if authorized. In addition to this, law enforcement officers will require individuals to complete treatment or a social service plan for individuals to evade further involvement with the criminal justice system. Programs focused on alternatives surrounding this description include Civil Citation Network (CCN), Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), Veterans Diversion and Stop, Triage, Engage, Educate, Rehabilitate (STEER). For example, the LEAD program has law enforcement work with individuals suffering from substance abuse every step of the way with case managers to keep track of necessary steps to aid the individual in recovery (LEAD-Bureau).

## **Additional Promising Examples**

**CAHOOTS Model:** In San Francisco, California, reforms are currently taking place to stop law enforcement officers from responding to non-criminal situations to limit the escalation of cases (Rodriguez 2020). Now, the city plans to divert funding from law enforcement to alternative emergency first responder programs implemented to serve the Black community, which disproportionately represents 50 percent of people in the criminal justice system but less than six percent of the city's population. In light of this, San Francisco plans to create programs following the CAHOOTS model, which has healthcare professionals, especially social workers, and mental health workers, to respond to non-criminal situations (Rodriguez 2020). This approach is meant to offset the number of non-criminal situations law enforcement officers respond to, especially since, in 2015, they responded to 60,000 occurrences between the months of January and February.

**WAGEES:** The Work and Gain Education and Employment Skills (WAGEES) is a Colorado-based intervention model that creates a grant program for community-based organizations helping individuals in the community. WAGEES chooses the community-based programs they send funds to support their services and foster relationships between the Department of Corrections and their service programs. Eligibility for the program stems from whether or not one is currently on parole or has a risk of being reincarcerated, usually through self-referral or referral by a parole officer. Additionally, WAGEES programs offer services housing, work development, substance use treatment, and mental health treatment (Thomson, 2018, p. 2). The WAGEES model recognizes community-based programs are the best ways to assess the needs of certain communities in order to make their resources available and equitable.

**Common Justice:** The Common Justice program is an alternative-to-incarceration and victim service program operating in Brooklyn and Bronx, New York that encourages conversation and healing through restorative justice circles, creates wrap-around service plans, monitors commitments to social responsibility. Their model possesses the ability to respond to felonies such as assault and robbery, and with the permission of those affected, Common Justice diverts these issues to its restorative justice process (Common Justice). Additionally, the program promotes that responses should be "survivor-centered, accountability-based, safety-driven, and racially equitable" (Sered, 2017, p.8). Their program model advocates for access to mental health treatment, trauma-informed care, and healing practices (Sered, 2017, p.12). Ultimately, this program recognizes there are no productive benefits to society through mass incarceration and dedicate their work to community-based care.

**Homeboy Industries:** Homeboy Industries is a Los Angeles program that provides wrap-around services to former gang members. Every year, their program offers services to roughly 9,000 people, including tattoo removal, legal assistance, mental health services, substance use treatment and prevention resources, employment guidance, as

well as family literacy. In 2018, Homeboy Industries reported having about 130 professional volunteers trained to support their services (Homeboy Industries, 2018). After seeking support from Homeboy Industries, one percent of clients reported being arrested in comparison to the 65 percent that were arrested three months before joining the program (Homeboy Industries, 2018). In essence, Homeboy Industries provides services suited to reintegrate gang members back into their communities with little to no contact with law enforcement once they join the program, avoiding recidivism altogether.

**Roca:** The Roca intervention model is one that operates in Massachusetts and Maryland, supporting people through a four-year plan to help them exit high-risk situations and provides work development services. The model follows four principles, including relentless outreach, transformational relationships, stage-based programming, engaged institutions, and performance-based management. The program fosters conversations with law enforcement to build trust with the community and divert people from incarceration. Additionally, Roca offers programs targeted at high-risk young men and mothers who suffer from substance use, are trying to exit gangs, deal with violence and trauma, and several other issues. In 2019, Roca reported that out of 904 high-risk men, 97 percent of their participants had no new arrests (Roca, 2019).

## **Recommended Next Steps**

### *Phase One*

- Conduct more in-depth research on non-criminal justice responses to 1) poverty, 2) homelessness, 3) mental health, and 4) substance use.
- Interview experts and program administrations and complete *Program Profile Template* for related programs. Each template will include the following information:
  - Program Name:
  - Location:
  - Inception:
  - Managing agency:
  - Target population:
  - Approach type:
  - Description:
    - Why was it created/what was the need/ any major catalyst for change?
    - How was it set up?
    - How is it implemented?
    - What would you have done differently, and why?
  - Outcomes:
  - Legal and structural differences:
  - Noted Metrics:
  - Cost/ Personnel Analysis / Impact:
  - Link:

### *Phase Two*

- Research and describe what Harris County is currently doing related to this study.
- Obtain and analyze data related to Harris County arrests and jail bookings.

### *Phase Three*

- Write recommendations related to the viability of Harris County, strengthening non-criminal justice and replicating best practices from other jurisdictions.
- How can best practices be strengthened and or implemented?
- Conduct short term and long term costs associated with implementing alternative practices.
- How success is measured and how to define it.
- Distribution of final report and presentation of findings

### *Phase Four*

- Establish standards and qualifications for the programs and guidelines for how to allocate grants to cities based on size and demonstrated need for such programs.

### **Additional Resources Needed to Expedite the Research and Writing Process**

- Access to all Harris County related data.
- Contract with two freelance researchers and writers to help complete the report while the JAD hires full-time researchers.
- Continue to work with the Budget Management Department to assist in the assessment of programs and cost analysis.

### **Proposed Outline**

- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Origin of Report
- Methodology
- Report Limitations
- Background
- Introduction paragraph/s on the criminalization of poverty
- Poverty
  - What are other jurisdictions doing to implement non-criminal justice strategies that divert individuals arrested for poverty-related crimes?
  - How are they implementing best practices?
  - How much does it cost?
  - What are the outcomes?
- Introduction paragraph/s on the criminalization of homelessness
- Homelessness
  - What are other jurisdictions doing to implement non-criminal justice strategies that divert individuals who are charged with crimes related to homelessness?
  - What are they doing?
  - How are they implementing best practices?

- How much does it cost?
- What are the outcomes?
- Introduction paragraph/s on the criminalization of mental health issues
- Public and Mental Health
  - What are other jurisdictions doing to implement non-criminal justice strategies that divert individuals with mental health problems?
  - How are they implementing best practices?
  - How much does it cost?
  - What are the outcomes?
- Introduction paragraph/s on the criminalization of addiction
- Substance use
  - What are other jurisdictions doing to implement non-criminal justice strategies that avoid arrest completely and divert individuals for substance use?
  - How are they implementing best practices?
  - How much does it cost?
  - What are the outcomes?

## **The Harris County Approach**

- **Poverty related charges**
  - What is Harris County doing to divert individuals arrested for poverty-related charges?
  - Preliminary data: arrests and jail bookings for 2017,2018, 2019
    - How are they implementing best practices?
    - How much does it cost?
    - What are the outcomes?
- **Homelessness related charges**
  - What is Harris County doing to divert individuals arrested for charges as a result of their homelessness?
  - Preliminary data: arrests and jail bookings for 2017,2018, 2019
    - What are they doing?
    - How are they implementing best practices?
    - How much does it cost?
    - What are the outcomes?
- **Public and mental health-related charges**
  - At any given point, more than 30% of the jail population is flagged for Mental health-related flag.
  - What is Harris County doing to divert individuals flagged with mental health problems?
    - What are they doing?
    - How are they implementing best practices?
    - How much does it cost?
    - What are the outcomes?
- **Substance use-related charges**
  - What is Harris County doing to divert arrests for possession charges?

- Preliminary data: arrests and jail bookings for 2017,2018, 2019
  - What are they doing?
  - How are they implementing best practices?
  - How much does it cost?
  - What are the outcomes?
- **Recommendations:**
  - Viability of Harris County strengthening non-criminal justice responses
  - Viability of Harris County replicating best practices from other jurisdictions.
  - How can best practices be implemented?
  - How much will it cost to implement best practices?
  - How will success be measured?
- **References**
- **Appendix of Program Templates**

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